

Attorney Docket Number: FSP0291

Application Number: 09/759,935

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Claims 1-21 (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A video on demand system comprising:
a headend adapted to address a communication comprising an identification of a group of subscriber terminals to all terminals of the group, so that the communication of the identification of the group is not addressed to any one particular terminal of the group and the identification of the group may be accessed and read by all terminals of the group;
the headend further adapted to receive a request for video on demand data including the group identifier, to extract the group identifier from the request, and to enable one or more modulators associated with the group identifier to pass the video on demand data downstream.
23. (Previously Presented) The headend of claim 22, further adapted to:
assign to the video on demand data a program slot associated with the one or more modulators and to communicate to the subscriber terminal, in response to the request, indications of the selected modulator and the assigned program slot.
24. (Previously Presented) The headend of claim 22 further adapted to:
periodically communicate the group identifier to the group of subscribers as part of a program stream.
25. (Previously Presented) The headend of claim 24 further adapted to:
periodically communicate the group identifier to the group of subscribers as part of an MPPEG data program stream.
26. (Previously Presented) A video on demand system comprising:
a video server and an application server;
the application server adapted to extract a subscriber group identifier received in a request for video on demand data;

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the video server adapted to cooperate with the application server to identify one or more of the modulators associated with the subscriber group identifier and to stream video on demand data to the modulators in response to the request; and

a video server adapted to create a communication comprising the subscriber group identifier, the communication addressed in such a manner that it can be accessed and read by all terminals of the subscriber group, not just one particular terminal of the subscriber group, and the video server adapted to periodically transmit the communication in a manner not addressed to any one particular terminal of the subscriber group, so that the subscriber group identification may be accessed and read from the communication by all terminals of the subscriber group.

27. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26 further comprising:
the application server and video server adapted to cooperate to stream the video on demand data to all subscriber terminals associated with the group identifier, and to enable a particular subscriber terminal that provided the request to view the video on demand data by informing the particular subscriber terminal of a program slot associated with the video on demand data.

28. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 27 further comprising:
the video server adapted to periodically communicate as part of a program stream the subscriber group identifier to subscriber terminals associated with the group identifier, and to communicate the program slot to the particular subscriber terminal out of band.

29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26 further comprising:
the video server adapted to periodically communicate as part of an MPEG data program stream the subscriber group identifier to subscriber terminals associated with the group identifier.

30. (Previously Presented) A video on demand delivery method comprising:
creating a communication comprising a subscriber group identifier;

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addressing the communication in such a manner that it can be accessed and read by all terminals of the subscriber group, not just one particular terminal of the subscriber group, transmitting the communication to all terminals in the subscriber group, in a manner that the communication is not addressed to any one particular terminal of the subscriber group, so that the subscriber group identification may be accessed and read from the communication by all terminals of the subscriber group;

receiving a video on demand data request from particular subscriber equipment of the subscriber group, the request including the subscriber group identifier;

streaming video on demand data to at least one modulator associated with the subscriber group identifier; and

communicating a program number of the video on demand data to the particular subscriber equipment that originated the request for video on demand data but not to other terminals of the subscriber group that did not originate the request for video on demand data.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 further comprising:
streaming to the subscriber equipment of the subscriber group a program stream including the subscriber group identifier, and communicating the program number out of band.

32. (Previously Presented) A subscriber terminal device comprising:
means for receiving a program stream including a group identifier that identifies a group of terminal devices, the program stream not addressed to a particular terminal device but instead available to all terminal devices of the group, and for tuning to the program stream and extracting the group identifier;
means for including the group identifier in a request for video on demand data; and
means for receiving the video on demand data.

33. (Previously Presented) The subscriber terminal of claim 32, further comprising:

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means for receiving via an out-of-band channel a program number for the video on demand data, and for tuning to a frequency associated with the program number.

34. (New) A video on demand system comprising:

a headend comprising software to address a communication comprising an identification of a group of subscriber terminals to all terminals of the group, so that the communication of the identification of the group is not addressed to any one particular terminal of the group and the identification of the group may be accessed and read by all terminals of the group;

the headend further comprising software to receive a request for video on demand data including the group identifier, to extract the group identifier from the request, and to enable one or more modulators associated with the group identifier to pass the video on demand data downstream.

35. (New) The headend of claim 34, further comprising software to:

assign to the video on demand data a program slot associated with the one or more modulators and to communicate to the subscriber terminal, in response to the request, indications of the selected modulator and the assigned program slot.

36. (New) The headend of claim 34 further comprising software to:

periodically communicate the group identifier to the group of subscribers as part of a program stream.

37. (New) The headend of claim 36 further comprising software to:

periodically communicate the group identifier to the group of subscribers as part of an MPEG data program stream.

38. (New) A video on demand system comprising:

a video server and an application server;

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the application server comprising software to extract a subscriber group identifier received in a request for video on demand data;

the video server comprising software to cooperate with the application server to identify one or more of the modulators associated with the subscriber group identifier and to stream video on demand data to the modulators in response to the request; and

a video server comprising software to create a communication comprising the subscriber group identifier, the communication addressed in such a manner that it can be accessed and read by all terminals of the subscriber group, not just one particular terminal of the subscriber group, and the video server adapted to periodically transmit the communication in a manner not addressed to any one particular terminal of the subscriber group, so that the subscriber group identification may be accessed and read from the communication by all terminals of the subscriber group.

39. (New) The system of claim 38 further comprising:

the application server and video server comprising software to cooperate to stream the video on demand data to all subscriber terminals associated with the group identifier, and to enable a particular subscriber terminal that provided the request to view the video on demand data by informing the particular subscriber terminal of a program slot associated with the video on demand data.

40. (New) The system of claim 38 further comprising:

the video server comprising software to periodically communicate as part of a program stream the subscriber group identifier to subscriber terminals associated with the group identifier, and to communicate the program slot to the particular subscriber terminal out of band.

41. (New) The system of claim 38 further comprising:

the video server comprising software to periodically communicate as part of an MPEG data program stream the subscriber group identifier to subscriber terminals associated with the group identifier.